3.2 Visual Arts teaching unit:

Note: This unit of work has been adapted from the unit of work produced by Cheryl Gay at St Clair High School, as part of the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme Vocational Learning Project* in 2003. Additional work has been completed by the Creative Arts Unit, Curriculum K-12 Directorate.

VISUAL ARTS SAMPLE UNIT OF WORK

Unit Title: *Artists and Issues*	Year 10	Duration: 10 weeks

Unit description:

An investigation of art as social commentary, exploring such issues as politics, immigration, gender, race, the environment, current events etc. In artmaking, a selection of 2D forms including digital images, collage, drawing, painting and printmaking will be used to express ideas and feelings.

In critical and historical studies students reflect on current world issues and events, how they may impact on them personally and how they can be used as stimuli for their artmaking.

Through critical and historical studies this unit will also give students the opportunity to explore the job role of the contemporary artist/designer and exhibit their final work for assessment.

Key practitioners:

Students will also study the work of artists who have depicted art as social commentary through their own artmaking such as Barbara Kruger, Maria Kozic and Gordon Hookey.

Forms	Frames		Conceptual Framework	
2D – Drawing, painting, collage, printmaking (poster)	Subjective		Artist	
3D	Structural		Audience	
4D	Cultural		Artwork	
	Postmodern		World	

ARTMAKING 60%

Students will create a 2D body of work that reflects exploration of their chosen idea or issue. Using digital images, text and photocopied images from print media sources, students will visually convey strong messages that comment on the world around them in drawing, painting, collage and/or printmaking (poster).

	5.1 develops a range and autonomy in selecting and applying visual arts conventions and procedures to make artworks
	5.2 makes artworks informed by their understanding of and relationships between the artist – artwork – world – audience
	5.3 makes artworks informed by an understanding of how the frames affect meaning
	5.4 investigates the world as a source of ideas, concepts and subject matter in the visual arts
	5.5 makes informed choices to develop extended concepts and different meanings in their artworks
	5.6 demonstrates developing technical accomplishment and refinement in making artworks

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES 40%

Students will investigate works by artists who communicate ideas and feelings on social issues through their artworks such as Kozic, Kruger and Hookey.

They will also explore the role of the contemporary artist/designer and consider the job specifications and duties of this occupation.

ASSESSMENT

ARTMAKING
Students will be assessed through an evaluation of both process and product. The body of work will be presented as an exhibition in a selected school venue. As part of the exhibition planning process, students will submit an Exhibition Proposal.

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL
Students will be assessed on Critical and Historical interpretations through written responses in their Visual Arts Diary.

They will also be assessed on research on careers as an artist/designer and entries in their *Employment Related Skills Logbook.*

	5.7 applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critical and historical interpretations of art
	5.8 uses their understanding of the function of and relationship between artist – artwork – world – audience in critical and historical interpretations of art
	5.9 demonstrates how the frames provide different interpretations of art
	5.10 demonstrates how art criticism and art history construct meaning

EMPLOYMENT RELATED SKILLS

☐ **Self-management**	☑ **Initiative and enterprise**	☐ **Learning**	☑ **Communication**	☑ **Cross-cultural understanding**
☐ **Teamwork**	☑ **Planning and organising**	☑ **Problem solving**	☐ **Technology**	

RESOURCES

Books:

Interpreting Art: A Guide for Students Christopher Marshall, Macmillan Education Australia 2002

Artwise: Visual Arts 7-10 Glenis Israel, Jacaranda Wiley Ltd 1997

Artwise 2: Visual Arts 7-10 Glenis Israel, Jacaranda Wiley Ltd 2002

Art Now: Contemporary Art Post 1970 Donald Williams and Colin Simpson, McGraw-Hill 1994

Art Through Australian Eyes: An Issues-Based Approach A. Mancini, Pearson Education Australia 1994

Aspects of Art Lina Tesoriero and Helga Nilsen, Science Press 1997

Vocational Learning in Creative Arts Vocational Education in Schools Directorate 2003 and 2005 editions

Employment Related Skills Logbook Vocational Education in Schools Directorate 2005 edition

Websites:

Ninemsn www.ninemsn.com.au

Myfuture www.myfuture.edu.au

University of Melbourne
www.union.unimelb.edu.au/gpg/proposals_form_2005.pdf

Create Australia www.createaust.com.au

Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au

NETS Victoria www.netsvictoria.org/placesthatnameus

Videos:

Artists in Focus #2: Biennale of Sydney 2004 Art Gallery of NSW 2004

WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Throughout the unit, employment related skills will be addressed and opportunities will be available for students to identify and document these skills in their *Employment Related Skills Logbook.*

Students will:

- understand and demonstrate explicit links between the unit of work and the employment related skills developed
- demonstrate an understanding of vocational pathway options
- explain the link between the unit's content and its application in the broader community.

Students will look at the different considerations artists make in relation to their practice, for example how to make artworks for exhibition in public places; in commercial galleries; to develop and maintain critical acclaim and sales.

OUTCOMES	SPECIFIC CONTENT FOCUS FOR THIS UNIT	
A student:	**Students learn about:** **Artmaking**	**Students learn to:** **Artmaking**
Practice 5.1 develops range and autonomy in selecting and applying visual arts conventions and procedures to make artworks	• the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power • the pleasure and enjoyment in making artworks	• investigate and apply selected conventions, activities, traditions and customs of the field of visual arts and design to make art where meaning is shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power • build their research, approaches to experimentation, procedures, skills and strategies and develop judgement in the practical action of using diaries and making of artworks
Conceptual Framework 5.2 makes artworks informed by their understanding of the function of and relationships between the artist – artwork – world – audience	• artworks using an extended range of materials and techniques and various investigations of the world • the world as the source of ideas and concepts to make art • how artists invent, adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks • the ways in which particular artworks relate to their own background and experience • how artists develop their intentions	• make artworks that build a body of work using an extended range of materials and techniques and various investigations of the world • develop research and investigative skills using their diary • invent, adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks • utilise their diary to plan and conceptualise artworks • develop their artistic intentions in the making of art and how practice becomes more informed as they continue to make art
Frames 5.3 makes artworks informed by an understanding of how the frames affect meaning **Representation** 5.4 investigates the world as a source of ideas, concepts and subject matter in the visual arts **Conceptual strength and meaning** 5.5 makes informed choices to develop and extend concepts and different meanings in their artworks **Resolution** 5.6 demonstrates developing technical accomplishment and refinement in making artworks.	• belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the **cultural** frame • concepts of art as the aesthetic building and defining of social identity	• further focus on how cultural and community identity and social perspectives contribute to the development of ideas and making of art • focus on issues of significance to them to generate ideas for artmaking and the conceptual interest of works for example: peer pressure, gender, politics, global warming, human rights, genetic engineering, the environment • consider the social context for their developing practice and relations between peers, teachers, the school, community, galleries and artworld

OUTCOMES	SPECIFIC CONTENT FOCUS FOR THIS UNIT	
A student:	**Students learn about:** **Critical and Historical Studies**	**Students learn to:** **Critical and Historical Studies**
Practice 5.7 applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critical and historical interpretations of art	• how practice in the visual arts in different times and places is conditioned by a range of interests, including the artworld, artworks and exhibitions, galleries and museums, the art market, theories • ways of organising information, ideas and arguments • artistic practices, conventions and procedures that inform the approaches to artmaking of different artists, group of artists and artistic movements	• investigate a range of practices in the visual arts in different times and places • discuss and write about their understandings of different aspects of practice • seek to explain the different artistic practices of selected artists and groups and different artistic movements
Conceptual Framework 5.8 uses their understanding of the function of and relationship between artist – artwork – world – audience in critical and historical interpretations of art	• selected artists, with a developing understanding of relationships between the artist – artwork – world – audience • how the world can be interpreted in art and the ways in which ideas are represented • different kinds of artworks including their symbolic, representational, physical and material properties	• investigate the role of the artist, including groups of artists, in different times and places and contemporary and historical contexts • explain how artists interpret the world in making artworks and how they seek to represent concepts through a range of styles and approaches • further focus on the expressive and stylistic possibilities of different media and techniques used by artists and recognise how these aspects contribute to the kinds of artworks they make • make comparisons between different kinds of artworks which take into account their symbolic and material properties
Frames 5.9 demonstrates how the frames provide different interpretations of art **Representation** 5.10 demonstrates how art criticism and art history construct meanings.	• belief, value and meaning from the cultural frame • concepts of art as the aesthetic building and defining of social identity	• identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences use cultural and community identities and social perspectives in making and responding to art • explain how critical and historical accounts provide a way to understand social conditions, perspectives and the social construction of meaning • consider how critical and historical accounts provide a way to understand how art can represent issues related to class, gender, ethnicity, politics, science, globalisation, technology, economics and the environment • identify and account for cultural orientations to art

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Artmaking

1b) Investigation of diverse social issues through visual studies.
Students select three articles from the print media or the Internet which discuss social issues at different levels. They may also include an example of poetry or song lyrics. Students paste these into their Visual Arts Diary and interpret the text in visual studies by drawing, painting or using collage to express their ideas. Students may include text as part of their artmaking.

Students reflect on the issues presented through the brainstorming activity and the visual representation of the text articles. Students decide on a social issue that is of personal interest to them. The issue may directly impact on their life or may be an issue that they have a strong affiliation with.

Employment Related Skills:
Planning and organising
- Collect and organise information using images and text

Cross-cultural understanding
- Reflect ideas of equity and social justice in artworks

Critical and Historical Studies

1a) Investigation of diverse social issues.
Students will be given an overview of the unit and discuss the notion of 'art as social commentary'.

Art serves a variety of functions for a society – it informs, teaches, and explores issues, ideas and emotions. It reflects a culture's beliefs, attitudes, opinions and values, and is an indicator of change.
Artwise – Visual Arts 7-10 Glenis Isreal, Jacaranda Press 1997

Define: What are social issues? Discuss the various levels for example, global, national, state, local or community. Brainstorm as a class: some examples of social issues at each of these levels. Students document this information in their Visual Arts Diary. Additional questions to consider:

a. How do we find out about social issues in today's world?
b. How do these issues affect the individual?

Employment Related Skills:
Planning and organising
- Research information on world events

Communication
- Contribute to group discussions

2a) Students choose a social issue and conduct research on the issue.
This issue will be the stimulus for students' artmaking. Students are to look at a variety of sources to gain a general understanding of the issue and learn about various points of view. Sources can come from Internet research, newspapers or reports from TV program articles (*60 Minutes* often publishes article scripts on their website). Research can be conducted in the library so that students have access to a variety of media sources. Students collect, organise and analyse the information and images in their Visual Arts Diary.

Artmaking	Critical and Historical Studies
3) Students are to work towards creating a 2D body of work that reflects exploration of their chosen idea or issue. Students begin to sketch ideas and experiment with media in their Visual Arts Diary which extends studies completed in weeks 1 and 2. Using digital images, text and photocopied images from print media sources, students will visually convey strong messages that comment on the world around them in drawing, painting, collage and/or printmaking (poster). **Employment Related Skills:** **Planning and organising** ❖ Be resourceful when choosing media for artworks	**2b) The poster as a social and political comment.** Through Critical and Historical Study, students explore a range of 20th century posters which display social or political comment. Of particular interest are international and Australian war posters. The Australian War Memorial has poster resources on the website and also available for purchase at: www.awm.gov.au. Students are to refer to a selection of images and consider the questions below: a. Posters need clarity and drama to grab the audience's attention. Has the poster achieved this? b. What is the poster trying to say? Describe the methods the poster uses to convey its message. c. Compare the posters. How do they differ in style, subject and message? Which one do you find most powerful and why? d. Compare and contrast an anti-conscription poster with a recruiting poster from World War One. What are the differences in messages, symbols and images? Which do you find most compelling? Discuss your feelings about this media. **Employment Related Skills:** **Communication** ❖ Interpret meaning and symbols in poster design
4b) Students continue to practice art making using an extended range of materials and techniques to express their various investigations of the world. At this stage students should have resolved their choice of media, proposed messages to be communicated and artistic influences. **Employment Related Skills:** **Initiative and enterprise** ❖ Use creative processes in artmaking	**4a) Issues associated with land-rights, reconciliation, politics and changing patterns of cultural identity.** Aboriginal artist Gordon Hookey's work addresses the politics of land and justice confronting a contemporary Aboriginal Australian. Students reflect on their interpretation of events in Hookey's artwork. For more information on Gordon Hookey, go to the website for the exhibition *Places That Name Us* (2003) www.netsvictoria.org/placesthatnameus Additional information on Gordon Hookey can be found on the video resource *Artists in Focus #2: Biennale of Sydney 2004* Art Gallery of NSW 2004. **Employment Related Skills:** **Cross-cultural understanding** ❖ Show respect for, and an acceptance of, cultural diversity

Artmaking	Critical and Historical Studies
5b) Students continue with artmaking, problem solving and interpreting ideas through combined exploration of media. **Employment Related Skills:** **Problem solving** ❖ Change components of an artwork to resolve structural and visual problems **7) The artist's exhibition space.** Students are to consider the body of work they are currently creating. In groups, students are to put together an 'Exhibition Proposal' similar to the one for the George Paton Gallery found at: www.union.unimelb.edu.au/gpg/proposals_form_2005.pdf The information needs to focus on a chosen school exhibition space. The proposal is to feature information on: • the exhibition space • the floor plan • exhibition proposal from the group • artist's statements for their artwork • visual documentation This work may also coincide with a visit to a local gallery or exhibition space and time with an artist speaker. In regards to the artist's statement, students are to consider in their statement: • Their working methods • The development of their style • What they were influenced by • What was their intention in their artmaking • The frames in which the student worked *Artwise 2: Visual Arts 7-10* Glenis Israel, Jacaranda Wiley Ltd 2002 **Employment Related Skills:** **Initiative and enterprise** ❖ Organise the presentation of students' artworks in an exhibition	**5a) Students explore belief, value and meaning from the cultural frame.** Through Historical Study, they will discuss and write about different aspects of visual arts practice and how these can be interpreted from different points of view and how artists develop their intentions. Refer to the artworks of Barbara Kruger and Maria Kozic. Questions to consider: a. What indications do you see in Kruger and Kozic's artworks to tell you they are a product of our present society? b. Choose one artwork by each artist and discuss why you believe the artwork was made and what is its purpose. **Employment Related Skills:** **Communication** ❖ Interpret thoughts, ideas and feelings of creative works **6) Students consider and research the occupation of the contemporary artist.** Using the website www.myfuture.edu.au students will research to find out about the occupation of an Artist/designer. Once students have accessed the website: • Click on *The Facts* • Under 'Work and Employment', click on *Occupations* • Search for 'fine artist' • Click on the results link Teachers can also refer to the career exploration activities outlined in Section 3 of this booklet *(Vocational Learning in Creative Arts).* Brainstorm as a class the positive and negative aspects of being an artist/designer. Issues may include the ability to follow an artistic dream versus income. Other points of discussion may include issues surrounding the quote below from the CREATE Australia website www.createaust.com.au *Visual artists and craftspeople tend to have random career pathways. Traditionally they have used exhibitions as the main means of selling their work, but this is changing as more practitioners access retail outlets and promote their work through craft shows, shops, international trade fairs and markets.*

Artmaking	Critical and Historical Studies
8&9) Students resolve artworks and work towards presentation for exhibition and assessment. Discuss with students ways that artists prepare their artworks for exhibition and show them techniques for mounting and framing. **10a) Students present artworks in an exhibition for assessment.** On display will be their labelled 2D body of work with accompanying artist statement and Visual Arts Diary. **10b) Logging employment related skills.** Students will reflect on their activities throughout the unit *Artists and Issues* by completing a Classroom log sheet from their *Employment Related Skills Logbook*. Teachers can assist students in documenting employment related skills from the suggested examples featured throughout this unit. Please note that these are suggestions and there are many more ways that students have demonstrated employment related skills throughout this unit. Students will also reflect on the occupation of the artist/designer and the connection between the process students engaged in throughout the unit. Questions to consider: a. Identify the aspects of this unit that you feel simulate the tasks of a practising visual artist b. List the employment related skills and personal attributes required to become a practising visual artist. (*Hint:* refer to the research conducted in week 6) c. After studying this unit, do you feel that it is a career path you may wish to explore? Why? Why not? **Employment Related Skills:** **Learning** ❖ Assess personal strengths and areas for development **Self-management** ❖ Monitor and evaluate my own performance in tasks	Students may wish to document this information in the Classroom section of their *Employment Related Skills Logbook.* **Employment Related Skills:** **Technology** ❖ Use online search engines to research careers information

Evidence of Learning – numbers indicate the different components of the program

1a. Students discuss their understanding of social issues.
1b. Students document in their diaries responses which show an understanding of social issues.

2a. Students engage in research to explore various social issues as subject matter for their artmaking.
2b. Students engage in both written and verbal responses to posters as social and political comment.

3. Students document planning and the design of 2D artworks.

4a. Students comment in written form an understanding of Gordon Hookey's work through the Cultural frame.
4b. Students artmaking shows exploration of techniques and imagery.

5a. Students engage in class discussions and write about their thoughts on Kruger and Kozic's artworks through the Cultural frame.
5b. Students' artworks incorporate techniques and ideas from studied artists' examples.

6. Students are engaged in research activities to find out about the occupation of artist/designer. Students provide written responses in their Visual Arts Diary.

7. Students create an exhibition proposal considering the body of work they are creating.

8&9. Students resolve artworks and prepare them for exhibition.

10a. Students will present their work for exhibition and assessment, submitting an artists' statement to accompany the work.
10b. Students provide documentation of employment related skills developed throughout this unit.

Feedback – numbers indicate the different components of the program

1a. Teacher and student discussion.
1b. Teacher provides written feedback through submission of diaries.

2a. Teacher provides individual verbal feedback and class discussion.
2b. Teacher provides written feedback through general collection of Visual Arts Diaries.

3. Teacher provides oral feedback of planning and design samples and experimentation with media.

4a. Teacher provides written evaluation of responses.
4b. Teacher provides individual and class verbal feedback.

5a&b. Teacher provides verbal feedback during discussions and written feedback through the collection of diaries.

6. Teacher provides written and verbal feedback to students interested in doing further research on careers in the Visual Arts. Opportunities provided for students to do further research.

7. Teacher provides written feedback.

8&9. Teacher provides individual verbal feedback.

10a. Teacher provides assistance with choices for presentation and verbal feedback. Teacher provides written evaluation of body of work and presentation.
10b. Teacher provides verbal and written feedback through the collection of log sheets and/or *Employment Related Skills Logbook.*

Please note: Assessment tasks to be developed in both Artmaking 60% and Critical and Historical 40% to reflect the Evidence of Learning and Feedback. Examples may include:

- **Artmaking** — presenting the body of work for exhibition, Visual Arts Diary planning
- **Critical and Historical Study** — exhibition proposal, artists' statement, artist/design career research.

This unit of work was originally written for the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme Activity undertaken by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate in October 2003. The Activity focused on the development of a unit of work making explicit linkages between students' learning in the mainstream curriculum and vocational learning. This unit was first taught to students at St Clair High School in February-March 2004.

The images throughout the unit are samples of some students' art works in progress. These works reflect an exploration of different issues significant to the various students. Some students worked collaboratively.

A diverse range of art materials were used and the issues varied from global terrorism to the fall of Saddam Hussein, to the illegal use of performance enhancing drugs in professional sport, to drought and water restrictions in New South Wales.